

News Release

GLBT Chorus Celebrates Support from Faith Communities with Concert at UMC on Nov. 10, 2006, at 11 a.m.

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Tuesday, October 24, 2006



CROOKSTON, MN (October 17, 2006) – Reclaiming Faith: In the Spirit of Justice is the title of a provocative outreach concert by One Voice Mixed Chorus to be held on Nov. 10, 2006, at 11:00 a.m. in Kiehle Auditorium on the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) campus. One Voice Mixed Chorus, a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) chorus, is based in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.

Combining music from a variety of spiritual traditions with powerful story telling, the concert explores the “hot topic” of discrimination and homophobia in spiritual communities in ways that are thought-provoking and artistically compelling. One Voice Mixed Chorus is the largest GLBT chorus in North America with 80 singing members spanning ages 16 to 68. Appearing in Crookston as part of an outreach tour, One Voice is traveling to five cities in greater Minnesota and Winnipeg, MB from Nov. 9-12. Esteemed for their musical excellence, diverse repertoire, humor and a strong commitment to community outreach, One Voice will perform in support of communities and organizations where social change regarding GLBT individuals is active and vibrant.

Religion has been a source of both solace and suffering for many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals. While most GLBT individuals have been raised in an organized religion — and many continue to cherish their faith community — many have been forced to leave those communities behind. “Religion and spirituality can be painful topics for GLBT people and their allies,” explains One Voice Artistic Director Jane Ramseyer Miller, “but these concerts are intended as a celebration of the many spiritual communities that are taking a stand of welcome in support of GLBT people.”

The concert program opens with a stunning eight-part “Pentatonic Alleluia” and closes with a five-voice setting of a Sufi text from the Koran. A contemporary setting of “Hiney Mah Tov” by Jewish composer Iris Levine is featured, as well as a Hebrew chant by Linda Hirschhorn titled “Hallowing the Namings.” A chant to the Yemaya, one of the many deities honored by the Yoruba of West Africa, celebrates the feminine divine. The percussive soundscape, “Watane,” is inspired by aboriginal culture and recognizes the Two-Spirit (gay/transgender) role in Native cultures.

Same-gender relationships are celebrated in Sally Fingerett’s poignant and memorable ballad, “Home is Where the Heart is”. A key element of the concert is also the predominant sense of hope and humor heard in Pete Seeger’s popular adaptation of “Gimme That Old Time Religion” and Eric Lane Barnes’s “The Fundamental.”

In the spirit of outreach and education, churches and communities along the tour route will host an inspiring display of the Shower of Stoles to stimulate interest and conversation on the subject of spirituality and GLBT culture. The Shower of Stoles is a collection of more than 1,000 liturgical stoles donated by GLBT individuals representing 26 religious denominations from six different countries. Each stole contains the story of a GLBT person who is active in the leadership of their faith community, as well as stories of those who have been excluded from service because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The chorus will be hosted throughout the tour by local PFLAG (Parent and Friends of Lesbian and Gays) chapters, the 10% Club (GLBT organizations) at Minnesota State University Moorhead and North Dakota State University in Fargo and the Rural Aids Action Network in Bemidji – which will feature a display of the AIDS Quilt. A highlight of the tour will take place in Winnipeg, where One Voice will join in song with Rainbow Harmony Project – a sister GLBT chorus and host of this concert.

One Voice has performed for thousands of people in the Twin Cities, greater Minnesota, and beyond. Together with another 30 non-singing volunteers known as the Fifth Section of the chorus, One Voice has united gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and straight allies in working for social change for more than 18 years. For more information, visit www.ovmc.org or call 612-332-1302.

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